THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY

WE CHANGE PEOPLE. THEY CHANGE THE WORLD.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
THE AMERICAN STORY: READ IT, HEAR IT, TOUCH IT, LIVE IT.

The Center for American History is a history research center with few peers. The Center’s archival, artifact, and library collections contain treasures documenting key themes and events in Texas and U.S. history. These treasures echo with stories of the people, places, events, and ideas that have shaped our nation’s history. Examples include:

- Lt. Col. José Enrique de la Peña’s chilling and controversial account of David Crockett’s execution at the Alamo
- The weathered prison diary of Stephen F. Austin
- Unpublished 1955 recordings of the inimitable blues singer Huddie “Leadbelly” Ledbetter
- The Garden, an intricately stitched and inspired 1938 quilt by the legendary Pine Eisfeller
- The papers of distinguished news journalist Walter Cronkite
- The riveting personal papers of civil rights leader James Farmer, whose freedom rides through the South played a key role in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s

To access these and other treasures in the Center’s holdings, approximately 8,000 researchers, University faculty and students, and members of the general public annually visit the Center’s Reading Room and nearly 1.5 million people search the web site each year. Thousands of people also visit the Center’s three museums: the John Nance Garner Museum in Uvalde, the Sam Rayburn Library and Museum in Bonham, and the Winedale Historical Complex near Round Top.

Beyond its role as steward of some of the nation’s most valuable historical materials, the Center uses these collections to inspire its own important research projects, including Extraordinary Circumstances: The Presidency of Gerald R. Ford, by Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer David Hume Kennerly, the Texas House Speakers Oral History Project, and an in-depth history of Exxon from 1975 to 2000.

The Center’s vast holdings include six million photographs, 160,000 books, nearly 80,000 linear feet of manuscripts and archives, 57,000 sound recordings, 31,000 maps, 17,500 film and video recordings, and 5,500 newspaper titles. To date, only 25,930 images from the collections have been digitized.

To fulfill its potential as an outstanding scholarly resource for Texas and U.S. history, the Center for American History must provide state-of-the-art technology for on-site researchers, expand its digital repository for scholars around the world, increase staff to ensure that the collections are available for research, and expand its space to support free public programming and exhibitions.
CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

The Center for American History is poised to attain a new level of excellence in archival collections research, outreach, and public education. Gifts to the Center’s capital campaign will support essential facilities improvements, graduate-student programs, as well as expanded curatorial, archival, programmatic, and special-project resources. Investment in these areas will enable the Center to realize its full potential among the world’s leading history research institutes.

Superior Facilities
A world-class history research center needs a world-class space in which to serve the public. The Center is embarking on an ambitious plan to modernize and upgrade its existing public-service space on the first floor of Sid Richardson Hall on the UT Austin campus. Proposed renovations and improvements will include a technologically superior Reading Room for patron research, inviting exhibition space in which to showcase the Center’s many hidden treasures, and flexible public programming space for free public lectures, panel discussions, symposia, book talks, film screenings, round-table discussions, and more.

Museum Improvements
The Center oversees ten historic buildings at three off-campus museum complexes as part of its outreach to communities in Texas. The John Nance Garner Museum, the Sam Rayburn Library and Museum, and the Winedale Historical Complex require restoration and infrastructure improvements. The Center is committed to preserving and properly maintaining these historic buildings and the priceless collections they house.

Graduate Student Support
The Center will establish teaching and research fellowships for students in the Department of History, which will provide stipends to doctoral candidates who use the Center’s holdings for their research. Additionally, the Center will expand its internship program to enable even more graduate students in the School of Information to gain archival and library experience.

Research and Programmatic Excellence
The Center will focus on creating endowments for strategic areas including military history, American spiritual music, and the history of the videogame industry. Funds for experienced and highly qualified staff will allow the Center to open more of its collections to the public and expand outreach. Support for collection acquisition and operational support is essential to ensure that the Center remains at the forefront of the increasingly competitive acquisitions arena. Sustaining the work of the Center also includes conservation and preservation of deteriorating iconic documents, exhibition development, digitization projects, oral history projects, publications based on the Center’s collections, and documentary film production.
A DISCIPLINED CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

The campaign for the Center for American History is part of the University-wide campaign to increase resources across the campus and to create the “disciplined culture of excellence” called for by the Commission of 125, which established goals for the University for the coming 25 years. Gifts to the Center will support the following areas:

**Superior Facilities** ................................................................. $5,175,000
   Renovations, improvements, and upgrades

**Graduate Students** .............................................................. $2,000,000
   Stipends for Department of History doctoral candidates
   and internships for graduate students in the School of Information

**Research and Programmatic Excellence** ................................ $35,020,000
   Increased staffing and resources for processing and digitizing
   collections, acquisitions project development, and endowment support

**Total** .................................................................................. $42,195,000